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11. (U) Following is post's draft of the France INCSR for 2007-2008.

12. (SBU) Begin Text:

1I. SUMMARY

France continues to be a major transshipment point for drugs moving through Europe. Given France's shared borders with trafficking conduits such as Spain, Italy and Belgium, France is a natural distribution point for drugs moving toward North America from Europe and the Middle East. France's presence in the Caribbean, its proximity to North Africa, and its participation in the Schengen open border system, contribute to its desirability as a transit point for drugs, including drugs originating in South America. France's own large domestic market of predominantly cannabis users is attractive to traffickers as well. Specifically, in descending order, cannabis originating in Morocco (and to a lesser extent, Algeria), cocaine from South America, heroin originating in southwest Asia, and Ecstasy (MDMA) originating in the Netherlands and Belgium, all find their way to France. Seizures of amphetamines and methamphetamine in France remain relatively inconsequential. Increasingly, traffickers are also using the Channel tunnel linking France to Great Britain as a conduit for drugs from Continental Europe to the UK and Ireland. Although the total number of seizures reported in 2006 (latest published figures) declined by 6.73 percent from 2005 levels (to 78,287), the gross total of the quantity of seizures of cocaine (HCL), Heroin, Khat, AND MDMA all increased, whereas certain cannabis products, cocaine base ("crack" form) and LSD all decreased. Drug trafficking and possession arrests decreased in 2006 by 8.16 percent to 110,486. This represents a significant decrease from 2004 when 121,526 arrests occurred since the peak year of 1974 when the first statistics became available. France is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention.

II. Status of Country

Cannabis users are the largest group of drug users in France, according to official French government statistics. By contrast, users of the next most popular drugs, heroin and cocaine, account for approximately 4 percent and 2 percent of users respectively. France's drug control agency, the Mission Interministerielle de la Lutte Contre la Drogue et la Toxicomanie (MILDT, or the Interministerial Mission for the Fight Against Drugs and Drug Addiction), is the focal point for French national drug control policy. Created in 1990, the MILDT (which received its current name in 1996) coordinates the 19 ministerial departments that have direct roles in establishing, implementing, and enforcing France's domestic and international drug control strategy. The MILDT is primarily a policy organ, but cooperates closely with law

enforcement officials. The French also participate in regional cooperation programs initiated and sponsored by the European Union. Since the mid-1990s, death by drug overdose has declined dramatically from 564 reported deaths in 1994 to 57 deaths during 2005. Possession of drugs for personal use and possession of drugs for distribution both constitute crimes under French law and both are regularly enforced. Penalties for drug trafficking can include up to life imprisonment. French narcotics agencies are effective, technically capable and make heavy use of electronic surveillance capabilities. In France, the counterpart to the DEA is the Office Centrale pour la Repression du Traffic Illicite des Stupefiants (OCRTIS), also referred to as the Central Narcotics Office (CNO). French authorities report that France based drug rings appear to be decreasingly focused on a single product, and are increasingly involved in other criminal activities such as money laundering and clandestine gambling.

III. Country Actions Against Drugs in 2007

Policy Initiatives. In late 2004, France launched a five year action plan called "programme drogue et toxicomanie" (Drug and Addiction Program) to reduce drug use among the population and lessen social health damage caused by the use and trafficking of narcotics. A full assessment of the program is expected to be published during 2008, when it reaches the end of its cycle, upon which a new program will be introduced. The 2004 program's successes include launching a 38 million euro (approx. \$50.5 million) national information campaign on cannabis use in 2005 as well as an increase in France's medical treatment for cannabis and heroin users/addicts. The program also provided funding (up to 1.2 million euros (approx. \$1.6 million)) for France's contributions to EU and UN counternarcotics programs in four priority areas: Central and Eastern Europe, Africa, Central Asia and Latin America/Caribbean. While France's bilateral counternarcotics programs focus on the Caribbean basin, special technical bilateral assistance has also been provided to Afghanistan through France's Development Agency (AFD). Ten million euros went to training Afghan counternarcotics police and to fund a crop substitution program that will boost cotton cultivation in the provinces of Konduz and Balkh.

Law Enforcement Efforts. In 2007, French authorities made several important narcotics seizures. On January 18, 2007 French customs officials at the port in the northern city of Dunkerque seized 356 kg of heroin, a record for the largest seizure of this drug in France. The heroin, which was valued at approximately 10 million euros (approx. 13 million), was being transported in a truck originating from Turkey and bound for Great Britain. On March 9, 2007 French customs authorities seized 490,000 ecstasy pills from the car trunk of a British national near Dunkerque. The suspect was reportedly working with drug traffickers in Brussels, and agreed to transport the drugs from Belgium to Great Britain. The estimated resale value of the ecstasy seized was reported to be 735,000 euros (approx. \$967,157). With the help of the OCRTIS and French and British customs authorities, on August 7, 2007, French maritime authorities conducted an important operation which led to the seizure of approximately 600 kg of cocaine from a sailing boat in the English Channel. The boat which originated in the Caribbean was headed to a port in northern Europe. The value of the cocaine seized is estimated to be between 16 and 18 million euros (approx. \$22-24.85 million). During 2007, French authorities also conducted frequent operations involving the seizure of cannabis. On September 10, 2007, French customs agents in the southern city of Montpellier seized 618 kg of resin of cannabis. The cannabis which is estimated to be worth around 1.2 million euros (approx. \$1.65 million) was packaged in 20 sacks that were covered by several barrels of hay. Another operation, on October 13, 2007, led to the seizure of over 2 tons of resin of cannabis by French customs agents in the northern city of Arras. The cannabis with an estimated resale value of over 4.3 million euros (approx. \$6.1 million) was found concealed in several canvas sacs inside a truck en route from Spain to Germany.

Corruption. As a matter of government policy, France is firmly committed to the fight against drug trafficking domestically and internationally. The government does not encourage or facilitate illicit production or distribution of narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances, or the proceeds from illegal drug transactions. Similarly, no senior government official is alleged to have participated in such activities.

Agreements and Treaties. France is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1961 UN Single Convention as amended by its place, including a 1971 agreement on coordinating action against illegal trafficking. France and the U.S. have an extradition treaty and an MLAT, which provides for assistance in the prevention, investigation, and the prosecution of crime, including drug offenses. The U.S. also has a Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement (CMAA) with France. France is a party to the UN Convention against Corruption and the UN Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols against

migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons.

Cultivation/Production. French authorities believe that the cultivation and production of illicit drugs is not a significant problem in France. France cultivates opium poppies under strict legal controls for medical use, and produces amphetamines as pharmaceuticals. The government reports its production of both products to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and cooperates with the DEA to monitor and control these products. According to authorities, the majority of illicit drugs produced in France come from smaller home laboratories.

Drug Flow/Transit. France is a transshipment point for illicit drug to other European countries. France is a transit point for Moroccan Cannabis (hashish) and South American cocaine destined for European markets. Most of the heroin consumed in, or transiting France, originates in southwest Asia (Afghanistan) and enters France via the Balkans after passing through Iran and Turkey. New routes for transporting heroin from southwest Asia to Europe are developing through Central Asia and Russia and into Belgium and the Netherlands. West African drug traffickers (mostly Nigerian) are also using France as a transshipment point for heroin and cocaine. These traffickers move heroin from both Southwest and Southeast Asia (primarily Burma) to the United States through West Africa and France, with a back-haul of cocaine from South America to France through the United States and West Africa. Law enforcement officials believe these West African and South American traffickers are stockpiling heroin and cocaine in Africa before shipping it to final destinations. There is no evidence that significant amounts of heroin or cocaine enter the United States from France. Most of the South American cocaine entering France comes through Spain and Portugal. However, officials are seeing an increase in cocaine coming directly to France from the French Caribbean, giving impetus to the creation of the Martinique Task Force: a joint effort with Spain, Colombia and the UK. Most of the Ecstasy in or transiting France is produced in the Netherlands or Belgium.

Domestic Programs/Demand Reduction. MILDT is responsible for coordinating France's demand reduction programs. Drug education efforts target government officials, counselors, teachers, and medical personnel, with the objective of giving these opinion leaders the information they need to assist those endangered by drug abuse in the community. In an effort to combat the consumption of cannabis in France, which has consistently increased over the past 20 years, in October of 2007, Etienne Apaire, the President of MIDLT (since September 2007) announced a new government policy aimed at cannabis users. Beginning in 2008, the state will force those arrested for cannabis use to take a two day class on the dangers of cannabis consumption. The cost of the class, 450 euros (approx. \$660.00), will be paid by the drug user. France's current law (dating from 1970) includes stiff

penalties for cannabis use including up to a year prison sentence and a 3750 euro (approx. \$5,515) fine though it is rarely, if ever, enforced. This new measure is intended to be a more effective approach towards the prevention of cannabis use.

IV. U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs

Policy Initiatives/Bilateral Cooperation. U.S. and GOF counternarcotics law enforcement cooperation remains excellent. During 2007 the DEA's Paris Country Office and the French Office Central Pour la Repression Du Trafic Illicite Des Stupefiants (OCRTIS), continued to routinely share operational intelligence and support one another's investigations. The DEA and the OCRTIS shared intelligence was developed from a program which identifies orders for precursor chemicals placed from French companies for exportation outside of France. This program resulted in the identification and seizure of dozens of illicit MDMA and Methamphetamine laboratories located both within the United States and France as well as many other countries around the world. Additionally, during 2007, the OCRTIS and the DEA cooperatively conducted a controlled delivery of over two tons of pseudoephedrine to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The subsequent investigation of this shipment confirmed that the shipment was intended for illegal reshipment to Mexico for suspected use in the clandestine manufacture of methamphetamine. Further investigation, resulted in the seizure of additional shipments of ephedrine products in the DRC, totaling nearly 10 tons, and in the identification of Mexican nationals involved in coordinating the diversion of these shipments from Africa to Mexico. In March of 2007, the OCRTIS seized the equivalent of over 1.3 million dollars US in cash drug proceeds. Information developed from the French investigation was shared with the DEA and several other countries' law enforcement services, which has led to a number of valuable investigative links. The DEA and the OCRTIS regularly exchange information relating to suspected airline internal drug couriers traveling internationally, and other routine law enforcement information that leads to arrests and drug seizures.

The Road Ahead. The United States will continue its cooperation with France on all counternarcotics fronts, including through multilateral efforts such as the Dublin Group of countries coordinating narcotics assistance and the UNODC.

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